

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name R. A. Long Building

other names/site number UMB Bank

2. Location

street & number 928 Grand Boulevard [ N/A ] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [ N/A ] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64106

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Sara Parker  
Sara Parker/Deputy SHPO

11/25/02  
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the  
National Register

☐ other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

R.A. Long Building  
Jackson County, MO

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 Contributing      Noncontributing

1      0 buildings  
 \_\_\_\_\_ sites  
 \_\_\_\_\_ structures  
 \_\_\_\_\_ objects  
 1      0 Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

n/a

**Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National  
Register.**

n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

**Current Functions**

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

**Materials**

foundation Concrete

walls Stone

roof Asphalt

other Terra Cotta

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

Commerce

### Periods of Significance

1906 – 1952

### Significant Dates

1906

### Significant Person(s)

n/a

### Cultural Affiliation

n/a

### Architect/Builder

Hoit, Henry (Howe Hoit & Cutler)

## Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jackson County, MO

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

A. Zone Easting Northing  
15 363310 4329350

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Elizabeth Rosin, Partner & Janice Lee, Historian

organization Historic Preservation Services date September 10, 2002

street & number 323 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 112 telephone 816-221-5133

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black-and-white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name UMB Bank, n.a. (attn: Patrick Derpinghaus, Sr. Vice President & Controller)

street & number 928 Grand Boulevard telephone 816-860-7076

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64106

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R. A. Long Building  
Jackson County, MO

### SUMMARY

The 14-story R. A. Long Building is a Three-Part Vertical Block designed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Italian Renaissance Revival style at the northwest corner of Grand Boulevard and 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The short arm of the L-shaped plan measures approximately 97 feet, while the long arm measures approximately 116 feet. The main (east) façade, facing Grand Boulevard, is seven bays wide, while the south elevation, facing 10<sup>th</sup> Street, is nine bays wide. The steel-framed structure has brick walls and a flat tar and gravel roof. It was the first skyscraper completed in Kansas City. Above the three-story base is a ten-story shaft, crowned by a tall two-story cap. The three-part building form and architectural ornament of the cap convey the building's style. In addition, the extant boardroom on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor retains all of its original finishes, including rich wood paneling, intricate plaster ceiling moldings, and hand-painted murals. This room unambiguously conveys the business, status, and power of the building's owners, the Long-Bell Lumber Company, one of the nation's leading lumber purveyors. The most significant architectural elements of the R. A. Long Building remain intact. These include the building's original steel structural system; the formal three-part treatment of the building exterior, characteristic of early skyscraper design; and the classical Renaissance Revival architectural details of the building's base, shaft, and cap. On the interior, extant features include the boardroom designed for the Long-Bell Lumber Company and some of the original finishes in the upper floors, including marble wainscoting and flooring in corridors, oak doors and door frames, and bathroom fixtures. The building also continues to occupy a key location in the heart of Kansas City's business district. Over time, some elements of the original building design have been modified. Most notably, as the building converted from multiple tenants to a single tenant and as office technology evolved, more-open work areas replaced many of the small individual offices on the upper floors, although much of the original corridor system on the upper floors remains intact. Also remodeled was the banking lobby that occupies the base of the building. This work included filling in the two-story light well and replacing the windows and the round columns that lined the Grand Boulevard elevation. The owners currently anticipate restoring the windows in the building base to match the original design.

### ELABORATION

#### Building Exterior

Red and white granite-clad pilasters and square piers define the bays of the building's two-story base and support an entablature that marks the bottom of the building shaft. The piers and entablature project slightly at each end of the main façade. Multi-light aluminum casement windows fill each bay of the base. The main entrance occupies three bays at the center of the Grand Boulevard (east) elevation. A secondary entrance is centered on 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

Beginning at the fourth story, gray brick clads the building shaft and the fenestration changes to pairs of one-over-one double-hung aluminum sash windows. On the vertical spandrels between each bay of paired windows, the banded brick creates a ribbed effect. On the horizontal spandrels the brick has a smooth bond, adding horizontal emphasis to the design. On the east façade, the outer bays continue to project slightly as they rise the full height of the shaft. One-story bands framed by projecting terracotta beltcourses flank the top and bottom of the shaft. Within these bands lion's head medallions on the vertical spandrels flank the outer bays. The lower band also features a series of scallop shells placed above each of the lower piers at the center of the building.

The two-story cap is the most ornate of the three building components. Smooth limestone pilasters project from the brick building wall to separate each bay of paired windows. A terracotta floral garland frames each two-story bay. Between each story is an incised horizontal spandrel with a dentilled upper edge. A compound, carved stone cornice rises along the two primary elevations (east and south). The cornice features pairs of scrolled brackets, large and small modillions, and several layers of egg-and-dart molding all crowned by a row of scallop shell moldings.

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R. A. Long Building  
Jackson County, MO

Building Interior

The main entrance leads directly to the elevator lobby at the center of the building. Marble clads the lobby floor and walls. The metal elevator doors have an etched, stylized classical motif that dates to 1940 elevator improvements.

A variety of alterations were made to the upper floors. However, most floors retain the original hallway configuration and some retain the original marble flooring and wainscoting, as well as the wood doors, transoms, and frames that line the walls of the double-loaded corridors.

The building's most significant extant interior feature is the original Long-Bell Company boardroom on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. This room remains essentially unchanged from its original appearance. The boardroom features mahogany paneled walls with hand-painted insets in the recessed panels above the chair rail that encircles the room. On the north side of the room, a fireplace projects slightly from the main wall. Above the firebox the mahogany mantel features a painting of lumbermen working in the forest. Dark green marble clads the front of the firebox and the hearth apron. The ceiling features intricate plaster molding with a relief pattern of pinecones and needle sprigs. Three, brass, six-arm, candelabra-style light fixtures hang from the ceiling. Pairs of tall, multi-light casement windows and a tongue-in-groove wood floor complete the features of this room. A mahogany paneled door in the northeast corner leads to a small restroom with a raised platform toilet stall with mahogany partition walls and door and a one-leg lavatory.

Setting

The R. A. Long Building occupies a rectangular lot at the heart of Kansas City's Central Business District surrounded by other early to mid-twentieth century office towers. A four-story parking garage, constructed in 1958, occupies the lot immediately north of the building. Concrete sidewalks line both the east and south sides of the building. A paved alley runs along the building's west side. Above the alley, running behind the building, is a raised pedestrian walkway that connects the R.A. Long Building to the UMB building at 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The walkway enters the R.A. Long Building via an original window opening in the second story on the south end of the west elevation.

Integrity

The types of changes made to the R. A. Long Building, primarily to its lower level-windows and interior finish treatments, do not inhibit the viewer's understanding of its historic form or architectural style. The elevated walkway at the rear of the building was installed in a manner such that it does not significantly impact either the building's historic fabric or setting. Furthermore, these changes are consistent with those of other Kansas City properties recently listed in the National Register. Notably, the Chambers Building (25 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street); the Waltower Building (823 Walnut); and the Kirkwood Building (1737-41 McGee), all individually listed in the National Register under Criteria A and C; as well as the Robert Keith Furniture Company Building (1321-27 Baltimore), which the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office determined eligible for the Register, all have lower level alterations that are considerably more significant than those of the R. A. Long Building.

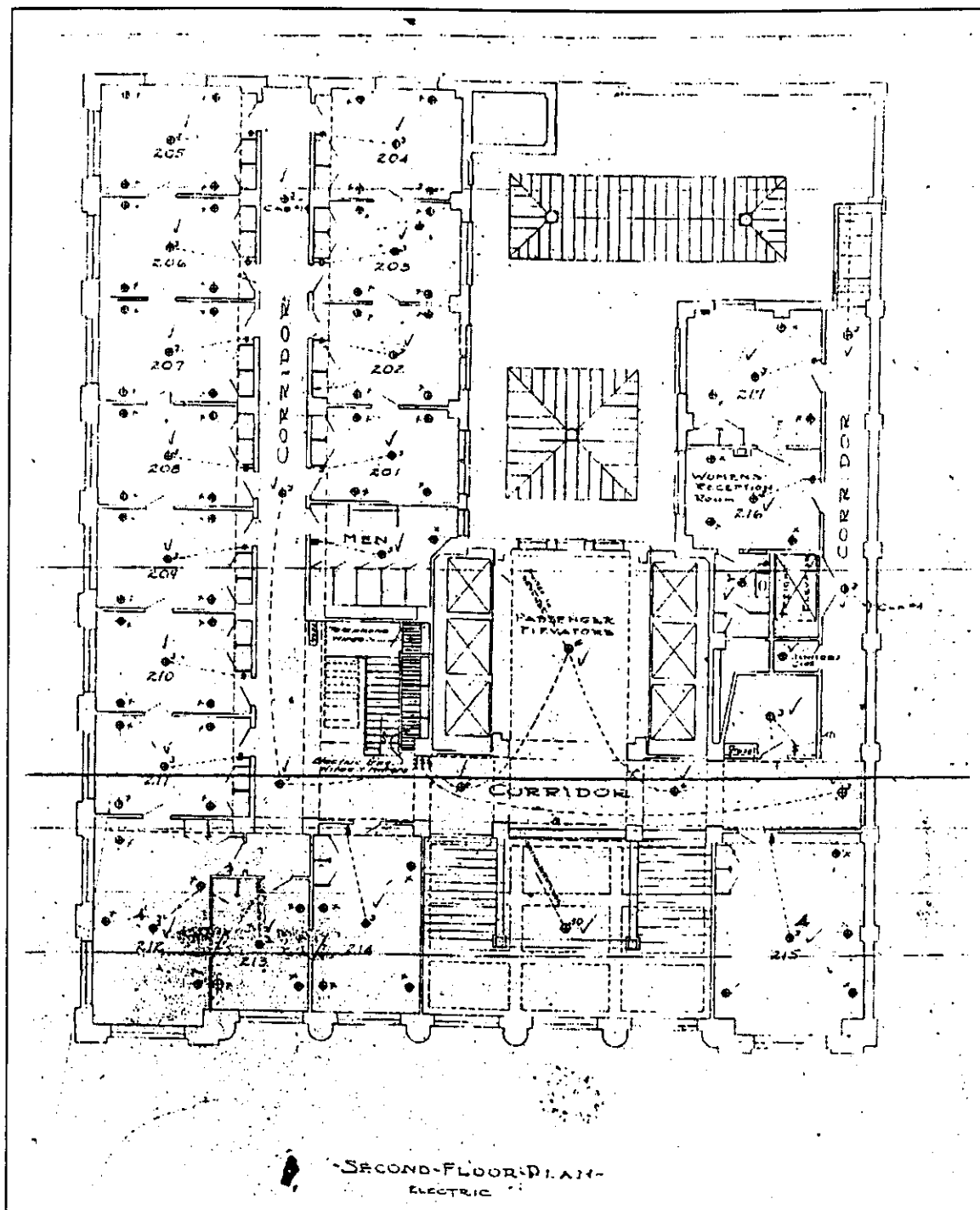
With the exception of the examples cited, the R. A. Long Building retains integrity in its location, setting, plan, and historic structural system. It retains the majority of the elements that define its architectural style, as well as a high percentage of all external materials dating from its period of significance, including its highly articulated brick walls, stone work, and terracotta ornament. The building's historic character-defining elements convey evidence of skilled craftsmanship, which communicate feelings about and associations with its historic commercial function during the period of significance.

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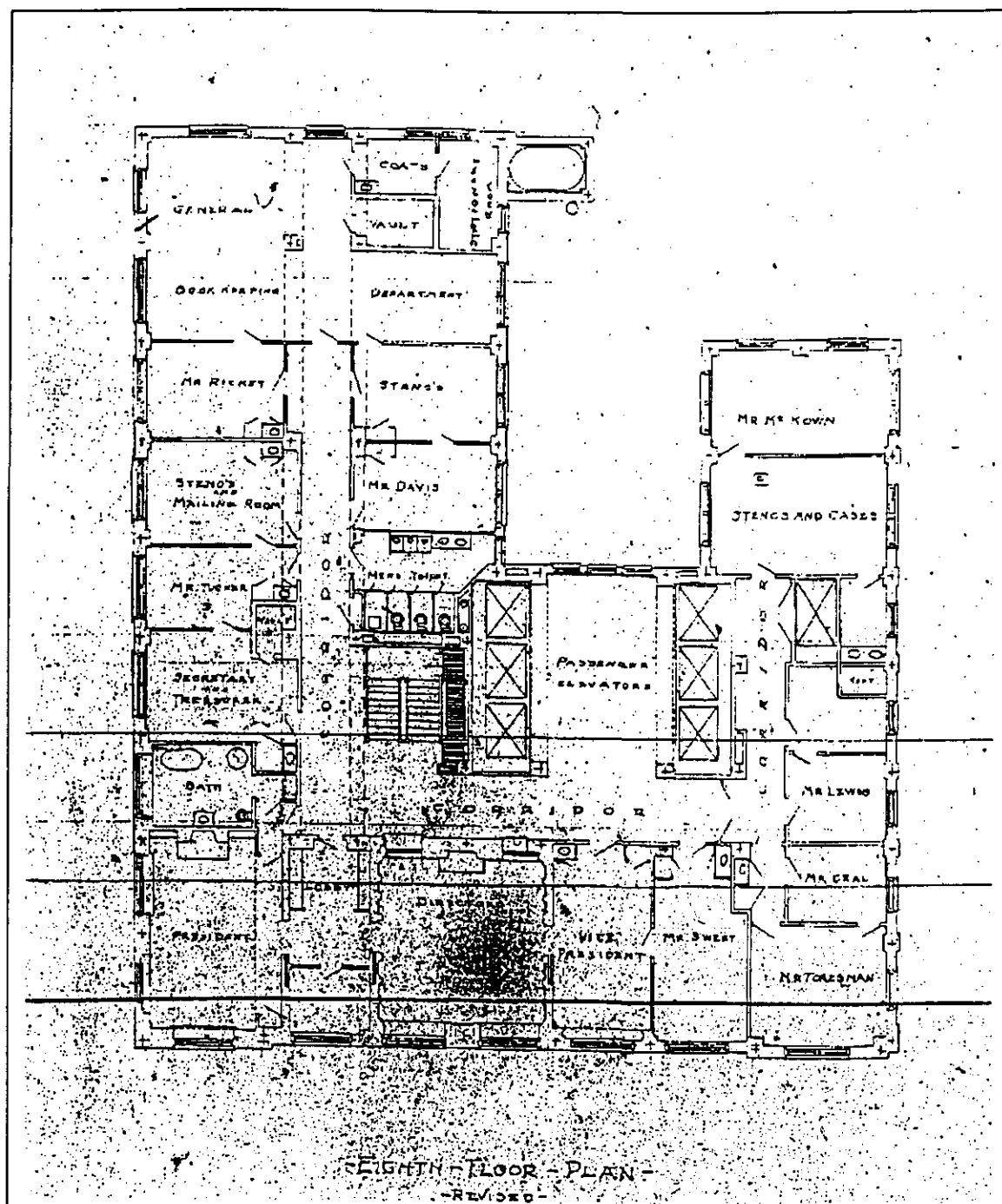
R. A. Long Building  
Jackson County, MO



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**R. A. Long Building  
Jackson County, MO**



Note that the original plans show the Director's Room occupying roughly the center of the front (east) elevation rather than the northwest corner of the floor plan. The boardroom was constructed in the spaces identified as "Mr. McKown" and "Stenos and Cases." The bathroom shown on the plans is extant in the boardroom.

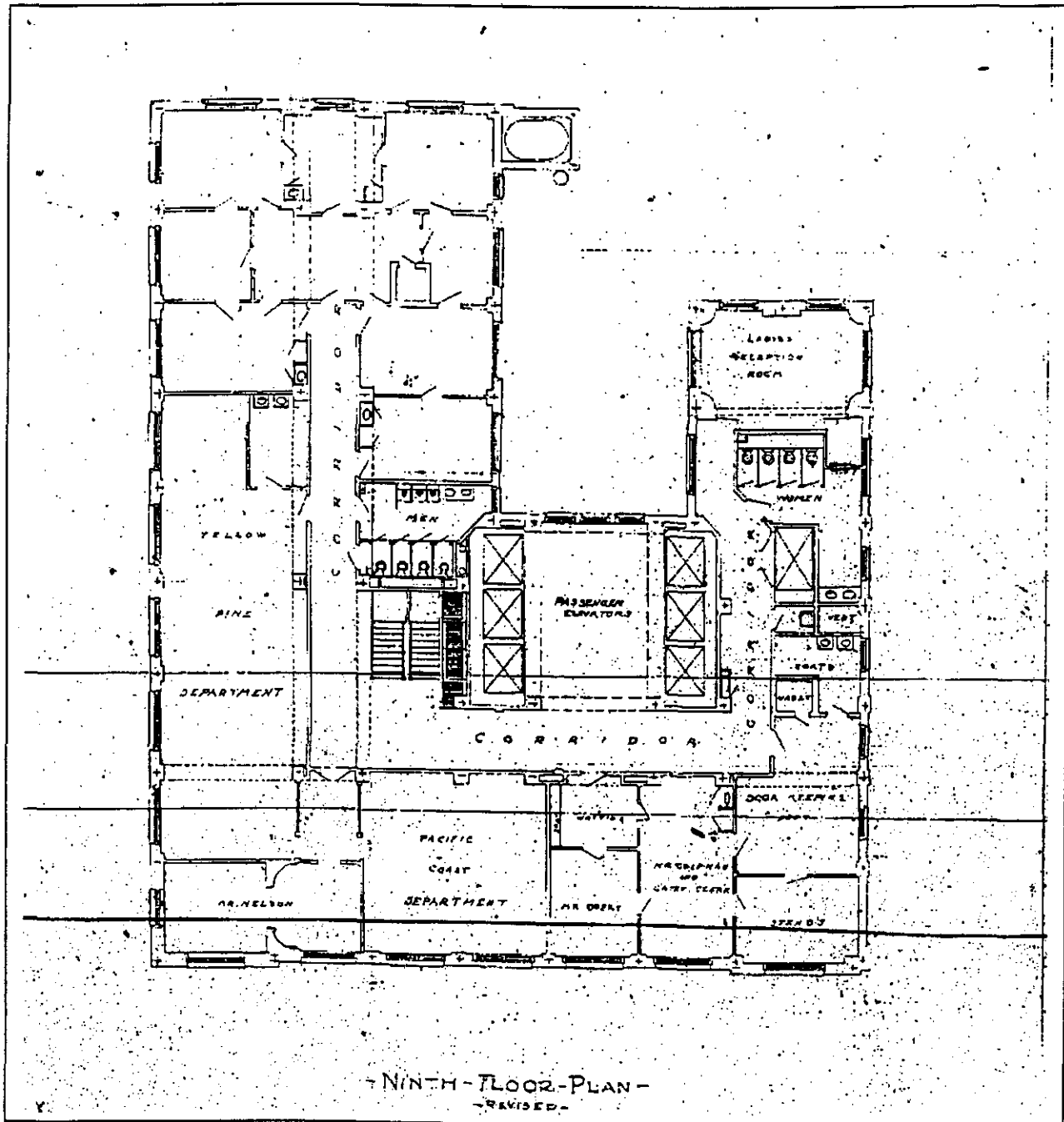


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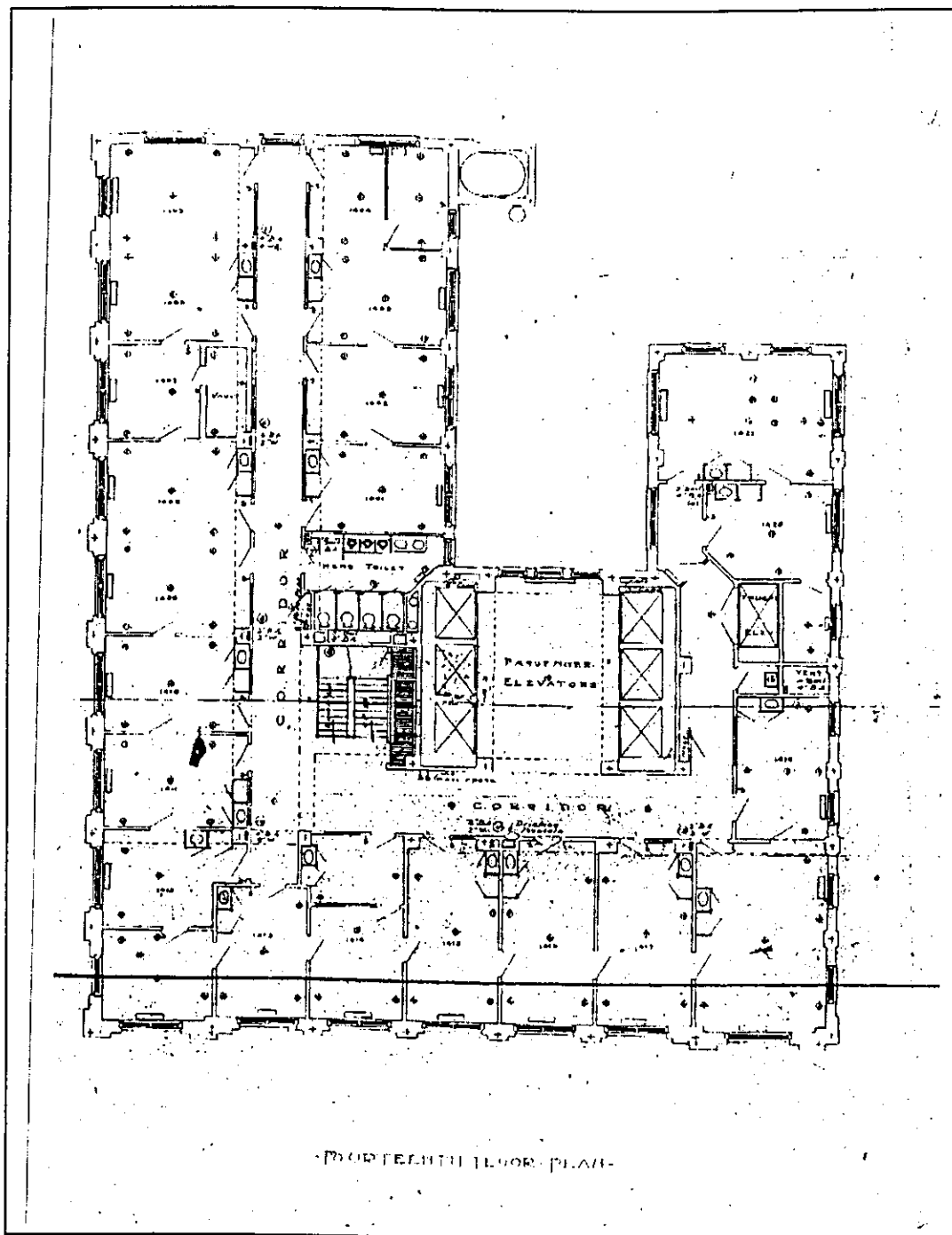


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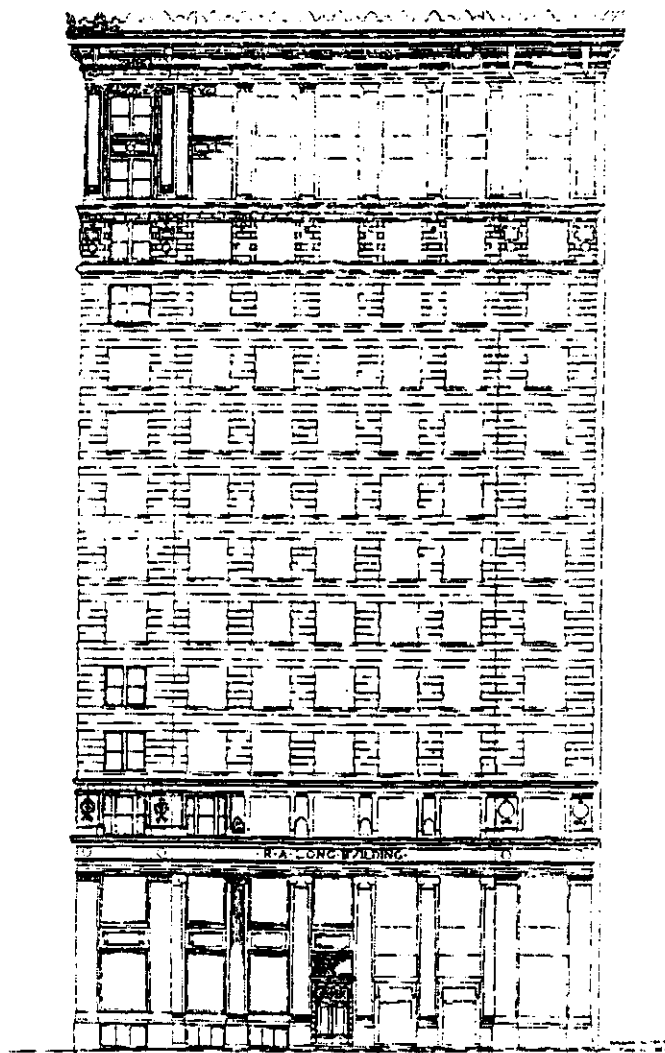


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FRONT ELEVATION  
SEASIDE

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

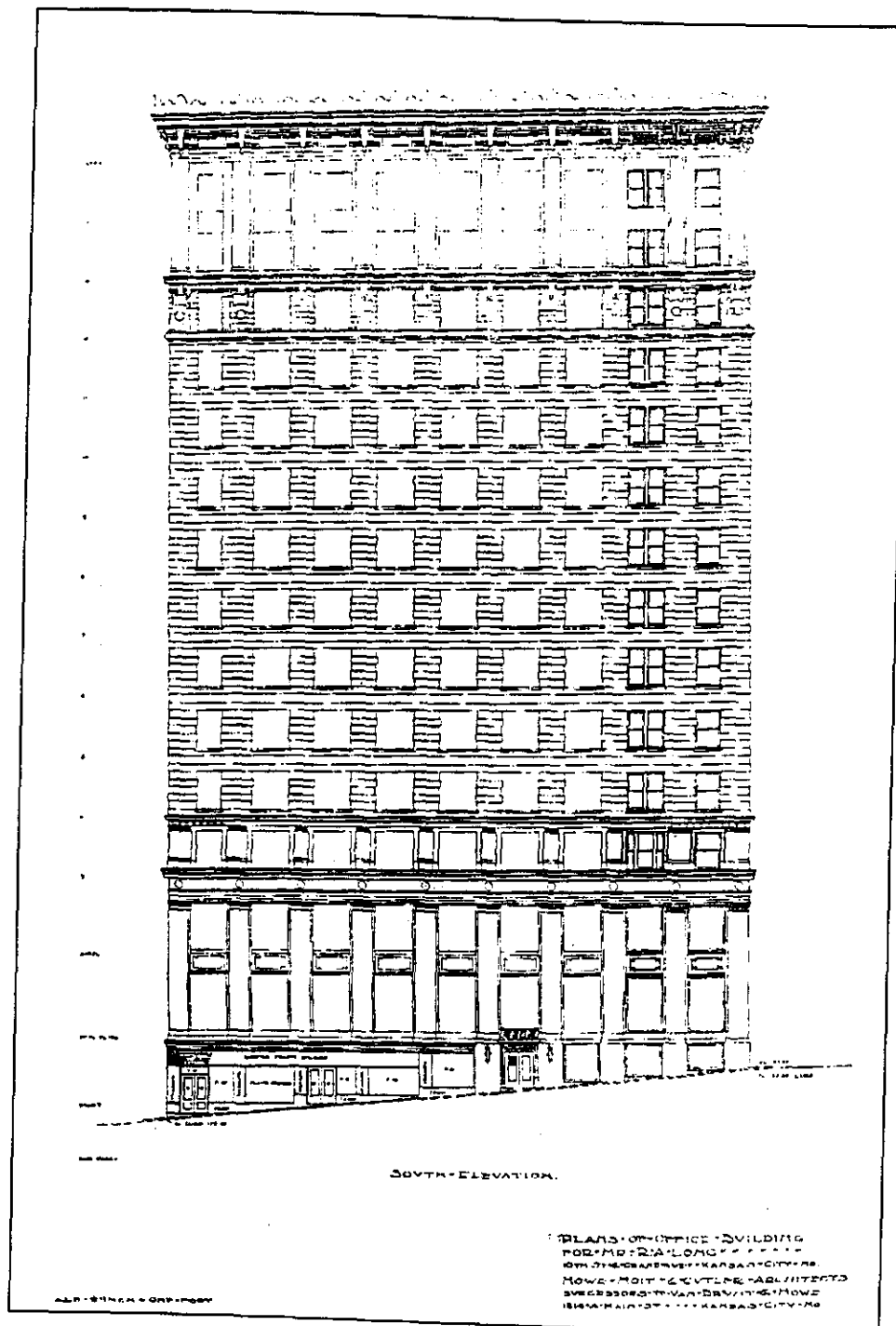
PLANS OF OFFICE BUILDING  
FOR MR. R. A. LONG  
BY J. E. SPANGLER - JANSSEN ARCHITECTS  
HOWE & HODGINS - JANSSEN ARCHITECTS  
SUCCESSORS TO J. E. SPANGLER  
1814 MAIN ST. - JANSSEN ARCHITECTS

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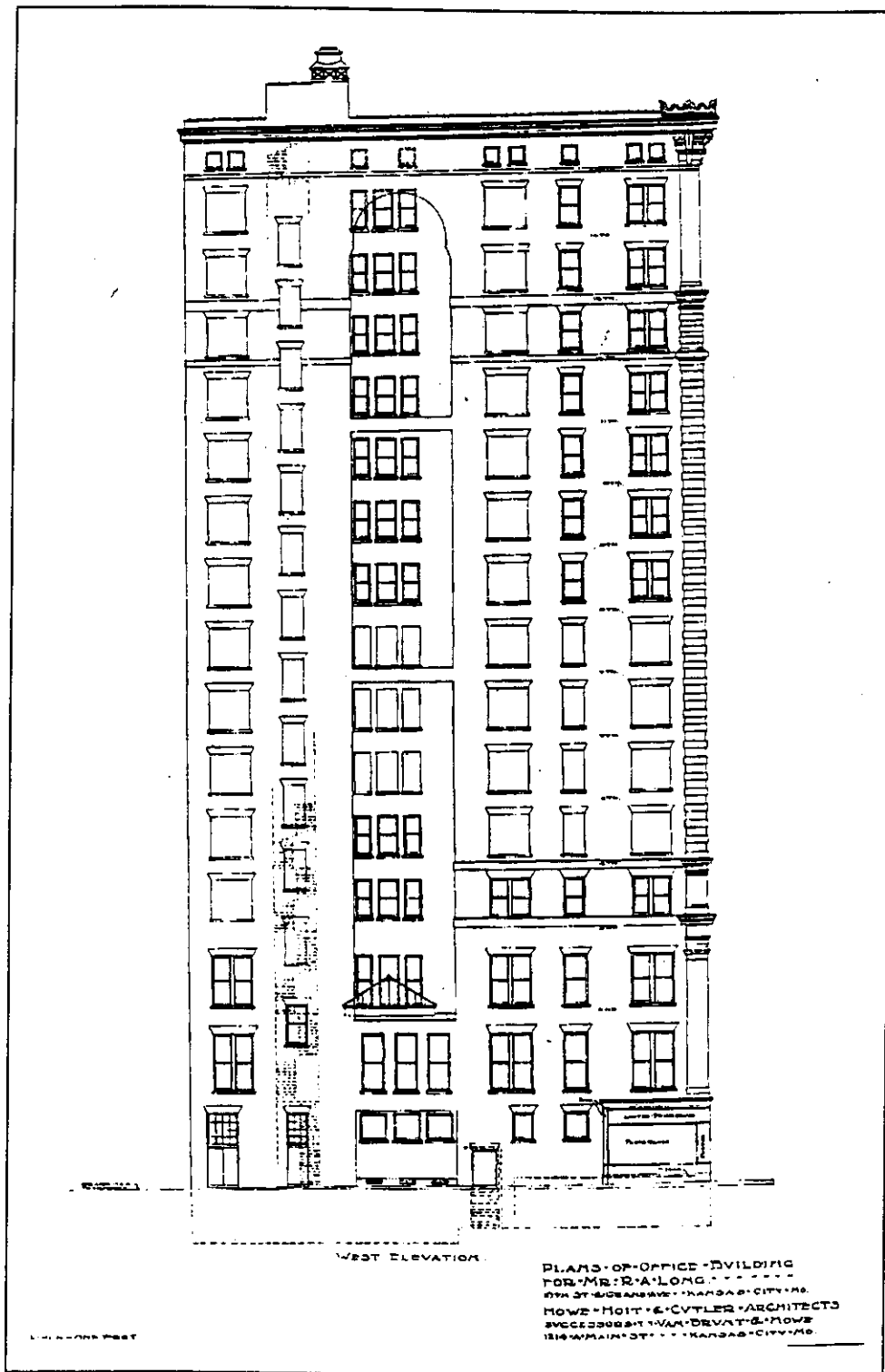


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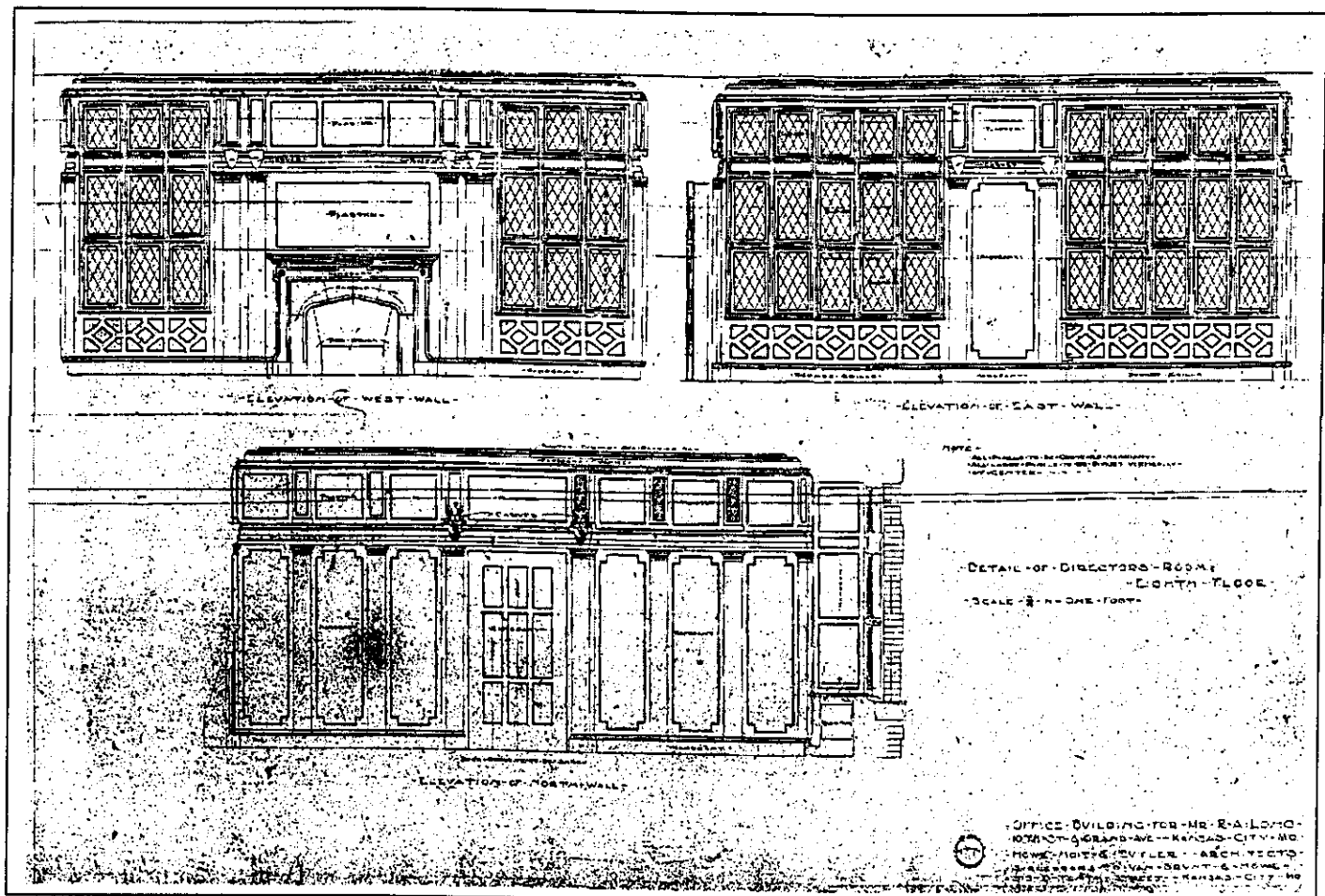
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R. A. Long Building  
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The R. A. Long Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce. Its period of significance, 1906 to 1952, begins with the construction of the building and ends at the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date established by the National Register program. In the area of Commerce, the R. A. Long Building is locally significant for its association with the Kansas City-based Long-Bell Lumber Company, a national leader in the lumber industry, and as a rare early example of a unique property type in Kansas City — the commercial skyscraper. By 1906, the company had a net worth of nearly \$15 million and the company's president, R. A. Long, wanted to erect an office building that both testified to the strength of his empire and enhanced the skyline of downtown Kansas City. The building set a new standard for office towers in Kansas City. It was the city's first steel-structure skyscraper, featured the latest technological advances, and expressed stability and class through its conservative classical design. The Long-Bell Lumber Company remained a leader in the lumber industry until its merger with International Paper in 1958. R. A. Long was a leader of numerous national lumber organizations, an early advocate for environmental stewardship and reforestation of timbered lands, and a dedicated philanthropist in his hometown. Physical modifications made to the building since 1952, primarily alterations to the lower level windows and front columns, do not hinder the ability of the building to convey its historic associations with commerce in Kansas City nor with one of the nation's leading lumber producers.

## ELABORATION<sup>1</sup>

### The Rise of the Long-Bell Lumber Company

Robert Alexander Long was born December 17, 1850 on a farm near Shelbyville, Kentucky. His determination to succeed in grand style led him to leave home at the age of 23 equipped with \$700, a grade school diploma, and a desire to succeed. Following a yearlong stint as the owner of a Kansas City butcher shop, he headed west to Columbus, Kansas, drawn by opportunities in the hay business. Although this enterprise proved unfruitful, he astutely noted the scarcity of lumber suppliers in the town and merged his hay business into what became a thriving lumber business. With partners Victor Bell and Robert White, he formed the firm of R. A. Long & Company in 1875.<sup>2</sup>

In 1884, R. A. Long & Company owned 15 lumberyards and continued success seemed assured. Long and Bell dissolved the partnership and, with \$300,000 in capitalization, incorporated in the state of Missouri as the Long-Bell Lumber Company. The reorganized company listed Bell as president and Long as secretary and general manager. The lumber business in western Missouri and eastern Kansas during the 1870s belonged to a handful of lumbermen. The soaring demands for lumber — notably, replacing the Kansas settlers' first primitive dwellings with finer wooden ones — taxed the resources of the existing lumber dealers. By 1880, an ever-increasing number of lumber companies buoyed the local lumber trade. Lumber sales in Kansas City skyrocketed from \$197,000 in 1875 to \$6 million in 1885, a leap from 1 percent to 10 percent of the city's wholesale trade. Enhancing the business were two important factors: one, timber was a scarce natural resource on the western prairies and two, the rapid advances of the railroads to points west facilitated the delivery of raw materials, processed goods, and people to the growing new communities.

<sup>1</sup> Unless noted otherwise, the history of R. A. Long and the Long-Bell Lumber Company is from Lenore K. Bradley, *Robert Alexander Long: A Lumberman of the Gilded Age* (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Following Robert White's death in 1877, surviving partners Long and Bell purchased his interest in the company.

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R. A. Long Building  
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By 1889, the Long-Bell Lumber Company, while continuing to establish lumberyards and sell lumber at the retail level, had segued into the wholesale lumber business. It established a wholesale division featuring an original product line of yellow pine and oak lumber, red cedar, locust, and oak fence posts. The company bolstered its supplies by quickly buying up other lumber companies' surplus lumber for resale. Seeing yet more opportunities for growth, Long-Bell added lumber milling and coal mining concerns to its operation.

By 1891, the company had aspirations beyond Columbus, Kansas. The partners moved the burgeoning company to the thriving city of Kansas City, Missouri. Long made this move during a period in which both the city and the lumber industry experienced rapid growth. Led by the Long-Bell Lumber Company, Kansas City became a world leader in the wholesale lumber market during the yellow pine period of 1890 to 1910. At the turn of the century, about 4,000 carloads of finished lumber left the city each year for the expanding western frontier. Long-Bell, as the city's leading lumber company, supplied most of it, trailed by Sutherland Lumber and other smaller companies.

A tremendous increase in population accompanied the emergence of Kansas City in the post-Civil War period as a major manufacturing and railroad distribution center for the products of the plains. The boom economy of the 1880s and the influx of native-born and foreign immigrants affected Kansas City as it did other urban centers in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1910, the city's population expanded ten-fold. The greatest growth in this period occurred between 1880 and 1887 when the population doubled to 125,000.<sup>3</sup> The city's economic development was very much the product of the bounty of the region and its strategic location. The city received the products farmers and stockmen raised in the surrounding area – livestock, grain, timber, and seed – and passed them on or processed them into products people needed locally or, for an additional fee, shipped them to competitive eastern markets. At the same time, the city's business concerns received manufactured and processed goods from the East, stored them (for a fee) and reallocated them (for a fee) to markets in the West.<sup>4</sup>

By 1890, Kansas City was changing from a nascent boomtown into a settled, cosmopolitan metropolis. Between 1890 and 1900, the population grew by 30 percent. In the following decade it increased by 50 percent again, exceeding 248,000 by 1910. During this time, trade and transportation led manufacturing as the primary venues for employment. The new generation of civic leaders focused on improving quality of life through the construction of public amenities, infrastructure, and institutions. Organization was coming to the business community as well. By 1890, associations existed among the city's banks and the real estate community, and the Commercial Club, precursor to the Chamber of Commerce, had been founded. Kansas City's business center continued its move south from the river, settling by the turn of the century in the vicinity of 10<sup>th</sup> and Main.

Broad and admiring coverage in newspapers, general interest magazines, and lumber journals documents the enormous success of the Long-Bell Lumber Company between 1904 and the 1920s. The company had reason to boast; by 1904, Long-Bell employed 4,000 workers in its 61 lumberyards in Kansas, Oklahoma, and the Indian territories; six subsidiary companies; five sawmill operations; and a railroad system of four logging roads. Long-Bell owned 229,000 acres of timber and mining interests, of which the latter produced 6,000 tons of coal a year. By 1910, capitalization of the Long-Bell Lumber Company reached \$14.5 million, with accounts receivable at nearly \$1 million, gross sales exceeding \$7 million, and total investments equaling \$7 million, including \$1 million in lumber and \$2 million in timberlands. It was during this peak period that Long commissioned the construction of his company's new headquarters.

<sup>3</sup> George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990*, rev. and enl. ed. (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 43.

<sup>4</sup> Sherry Lamb Schirmer and Richard McKinzie, *At the River's Bend: An Illustrated History of Kansas City: Independence and Jackson County* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1982), 47.



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During this time, R. A. Long gained national prominence in the lumber industry. He was president of the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, a charter member of the Southwestern Lumberman's Association, founding director of the Missouri and Kansas Association of Lumber Dealers, president of the influential Southern Lumber Manufacturers' Association, and organizer of the Southern Pine Association. Active in local circles as well, Long served on the boards of the Commerce Trust Bank, National Bank of Commerce, Kansas Natural Gas Company, Kansas City Life Insurance Company, and the Kansas City, Mexico, and Orient Railroad.

His success caught the eye of President Theodore Roosevelt, who invited Long to represent the lumber industry at the first White House conference on environmental conservation in 1908. Long discussed the financial realities of the lumber industry that led companies to waste up to 20 percent of each tree when lumber prices were soft. Under those conditions, he explained, it was difficult to interest the industry in planting seedlings to replace harvested trees. Long, however, believed that reforestation was a critical step to ensure the availability of timber to meet future demand. While this type of environmental conservation is standard practice in the lumber industry today, it was virtually unheard of one hundred years ago. Two years after the conference, Long personally pledged to replace every tree cut by Long-Bell, and a decade later he initiated a reforestation demonstration project.

During the second decade of the twentieth century, the company continued to prosper. Boosted by the military supply demands of World War I, Long-Bell sold the government more than 90 million feet of lumber, and after the war it earned \$50 million from its wholesale retail lumber, turpentine, and rosin businesses, as well as from company stores in its mill towns. Long was personally worth \$30 to \$40 million in 1920 and he was generous with his wealth, making frequent bequests to numerous local and national charities, institutions, and organizations, as well as donations to institutions in his company towns. Churches, hospitals, and recreation facilities all profited from his benevolence.

Trouble lay ahead for lumber companies. By 1920, stone, brick, and reinforced concrete construction were fast replacing wood construction, with steel skeleton framing becoming standard in heavy construction. Architects passed over wood in favor of concrete floors covered with composition materials and steel sashes and doors. Long-Bell experienced a greater blow than the decreased need for lumber, however. The fallout in the late 1920s and early 1930s from the stock market crash sent stock values nose-diving. The company reported its first losses in 1927. By 1931, Long-Bell losses in the stock market equaled \$5 million. The company's liabilities exceeded its assets by \$34 million and the interest on \$19 million of debt was piling up. The proud building that bore Long's name now became an albatross. In addition to the mounting office vacancies, Long previously mortgaged the building to finance construction of a church in his company town of Longview, Washington.

R. A. Long died March 15, 1934 believing that his once-preeminent lumber business was headed for bankruptcy and leaving a personal estate of less than \$100,000. Had he lived just a year or two longer, he would have seen the Long-Bell Lumber Company reorganize and begin its recovery. By 1942, Long-Bell owned and operated 72 retail lumberyards nationwide and continued its expansion in the northwest with the purchase of a sawmill at Klamath Falls, Oregon. Over the next decade, Long-Bell made additional strides under the leadership of president J. M. White. In 1952, 17 years after filing the plan of reorganization, Long-Bell was once again debt free. By 1954, company books showed accumulated profits of \$57.8 million since 1940. Company president John D. Leland merged Long-Bell into the International Paper Company in 1956.

The R. A. Long Building

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R. A. Long Building  
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From its founding as the R. A. Long & Company lumber business in 1875, the Long-Bell Lumber Company grew at a steady and steep rate into the first decade of the twentieth century. When the company relocated its headquarters from Columbus, Kansas to Kansas City, Missouri in 1891, it took a suite of offices in the Keith & Perry Building in booming downtown Kansas City. The company continued to grow and, by the early twentieth century, these quarters had become too small.

When R. A. Long commissioned the construction of the eponymous building in 1906, the assets of Long-Bell had reached nearly \$15 million and Long wanted his own building — an “office tower” befitting the prominence of the company it housed. He wanted it built to his own exacting specifications and emblazoned with his name. “Kansas City is to be a greater city some day than it is now,” Long said, “It need[s] such an office building, one of which it won’t be ashamed.”<sup>5</sup> He realized his vision with a \$1.4 million structure located on a prime tract of downtown real estate at the corner of Grand Avenue (now Grand Boulevard) and 10th Street.

The development of steel frame construction and elevator technology in the late nineteenth century enabled the construction of increasingly taller buildings. The typical skyscraper constructed at the turn of the twentieth century featured a three-part design that enhanced the building’s feeling of height. A solid two-story base supported the main shaft. The minimal architectural ornament found on the shaft was usually relegated to the spandrel panels below some or all of the windows. The top one or two stories received the most ornate treatment and expressed the building’s style.

Preceding the R. A. Long Building by sixteen years, the eight-story New York Life Building is regarded as the first high-rise on the Kansas City skyline. Like contemporary buildings of masonry construction, it included heavy, thick, stone walls and Renaissance styling. Although it was taller than the surrounding buildings, its overall appearance is one of solidity rather than of height. In contrast to the New York Life Building, the slender vertical granite piers and spandrels at the base of the R. A. Long Building create a leaner effect that guides the eye upward as the building rises above the ground.

The R. A. Long Building was a design amalgam that outfitted the modern steel structure with a traditional dress. R. A. Long was a man with conservative tastes. From his youth in Kentucky he had an affinity for the traditional imagery of classical architecture as an expression of stability and power. To please his client’s conservative tastes, architect Henry Hoyt outfitted the exterior of the building in the classical elements of the Renaissance Revival style, popular at the turn of the century for corporate iconography.

Long spared no expense. During the design process, he sent an associate to tour office buildings across the country to identify all of the must-have modern amenities and best finishes. The fireproof building had its own water, lighting, and heating systems. Six high-speed elevators — zooming 600 feet a minute at 20-second intervals — provided easy access to the building’s upper stories. Terracotta ornament punctuated the brick, polished granite, and limestone exterior. White marble and mahogany finishes were ubiquitous on the interior. No area of the building received inferior treatment; the back stairs had the same finishes as the elevator lobbies. In anticipation of the opening, the *Kansas City Star* reported, “Like everything [Long] undertook, the building is absolutely complete, thoroughly equipped, an excellent example ... of just how much perfection may be realized in a modern office building”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> “Robert Alexander Long,” *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 21 April 1907 (Newspaper clipping file. Kansas City, Missouri Public Library Special Collections), microfilm.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

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The premiere surviving space in the building is the boardroom designed for the Long-Bell Lumber Company at the northwest corner of the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Unchanged from its original appearance, the room is filled with materials and imagery that express the business of Long-Bell. The walls feature mahogany paneling below hand-painted plaster panels with Craftsman-styled heraldic imagery. The ceiling is ornamented with intricate plaster moldings cast with a pattern of pinecones and sprigs of pine needles. Three candelabra-style chandeliers hang above the large board table that dominates the room. On the north wall is a fireplace with a Mahogany mantle and green marble facing. At the center of the mantel is a plaster panel painted with a scene of loggers working in the woods. The room leaves the visitor with no uncertainty as to the wealth, class, and power of the room's owners.

The grand opening of the R. A. Long building was an event of note in Kansas City. According to the *Kansas City Star*, thousands attended the opening on the evening of April 25, 1907. In fact, so many people clamored to visit the new skyscraper that additional policemen were called to the building at nine p.m. to assist with crowd control. "A few women fainted, but no serious incidents were reported," recounted the *Star*.<sup>7</sup> Visitors rode the elevators to the 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, visited the newly finished offices, and listened to a continuous concert performed by the Third Regiment Band. In honor of the opening, hundreds of American flags festooned the building and all of the lights were turned on.

A variety of changes, mostly minor, have occurred since 1907. Reflecting the shift from multiple tenants to a single tenant as well as changes in business technology, more-open work areas replaced the majority of the small offices lining the corridors on the upper floors. However, many floors partially retain their original corridor configuration and some historic finishes, such as marble flooring and wainscoting and wood doors and frames. Improvements made to the elevators in 1940 constitute the most significant change made during the period of significance. This project included the installation of the existing etched metal elevator doors in the lobby.

Two notable changes occurred after the period of significance. The first alteration was the construction of a two-story addition within the original banking lobby. The second alteration, described in a building permit issued in 1964, involved the installation of "new aluminum La France doors." Presumably, this referred to the replacement of the windows in the building's two-story base with the window system that exists today.

In 1958, shortly after the merger, International Paper sold the building to long-time tenant City National Bank and Trust.

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<sup>7</sup>"A Crush at a Skyscraper," *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 26 April 1907, p. 1 (Newspaper clipping file. Kansas City, Missouri Public Library Special Collections), microfilm.

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Architect Henry Hoit

Long first encountered the work of architect Henry Hoit in 1904 at the St. Louis World's Fair where Hoit oversaw the design of the Palace of Varied Industries Building. Trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Hoit worked with the nationally recognized Boston design firm Van Brunt & Howe following his graduation. His architectural training emphasized the classical teachings of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and, as a result, Hoit developed an affinity for the proportions and scale of classical design and became adept at merging classical design with the ever-changing advances in construction technology. The R. A. Long Building illustrates Hoit's skill in addressing his clients' complex needs at the turn of the twentieth century. The design includes the first high-rise steel structure erected in Kansas City, traditional exterior ornament, and technological advances, such as high-speed elevators and a central vacuum system.

Long appreciated the monumental buildings and conservative, classical treatments that Hoit designed. The R. A. Long Building was the first of many notable projects their relationship produced. Following the R. A. Long Building, other projects Hoit designed for Long included the Independence Boulevard Christian Church (1906); Corinthian Hall, Long's mansion (1910; listed in the National Register); Longview Farm (1911-1914; listed in the National Register); Christian Church Hospital (1914); Longview, Washington, a company town of the Long-Bell Lumber Company (1920s); and ultimately, Long's mausoleum.

Hoit came to Kansas City to design the St. Louis Fair building for Van Brunt and Howe in 1902. He was subsequently affiliated with several partnerships in Kansas City over the course of his career — Howe, Hoit and Cutler (the direct successor to Van Brunt & Howe); Hoit and Cutler; and Hoit, Price, and Barnes. In addition to the work for Long, Hoit and his firms were responsible for some of the most notable buildings in Kansas City. Their work included the Bell Telephone Company Building, the first design in Kansas City to incorporate zoning-required setbacks; the Art Deco Fidelity National Bank (listed in the National Register) and Kansas City Power & Light Company (determined eligible for the National Register) buildings and Municipal Auditorium; the Baker-Vawter Building (listed in the National Register); the Continental Hotel (listed in the National Register and now demolished); Temple B'nai Jehudah; the Dierks Building; the Robert Keith Furniture Company Building (determined eligible for the National Register); and the Wheatly Provident Hospital Clinic and Children's Hospital. Hoit retired in 1944 at the age of 72.

Conclusion

The R.A. Long Company office building is a rare commercial property type and a symbol of the contributions made by the Long-Bell Lumber Company to the local and national economy as a commercial business. The building is significant for its associations with the company, which dominated the national and local lumber industry from 1906 to 1952, and as the first steel-frame commercial high-rise office building completed in downtown Kansas City.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

All of Lots 69 and 70 in Swope's Addition, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary for the R. A. Long Building includes the city lots on which it was erected and has historically been associated.

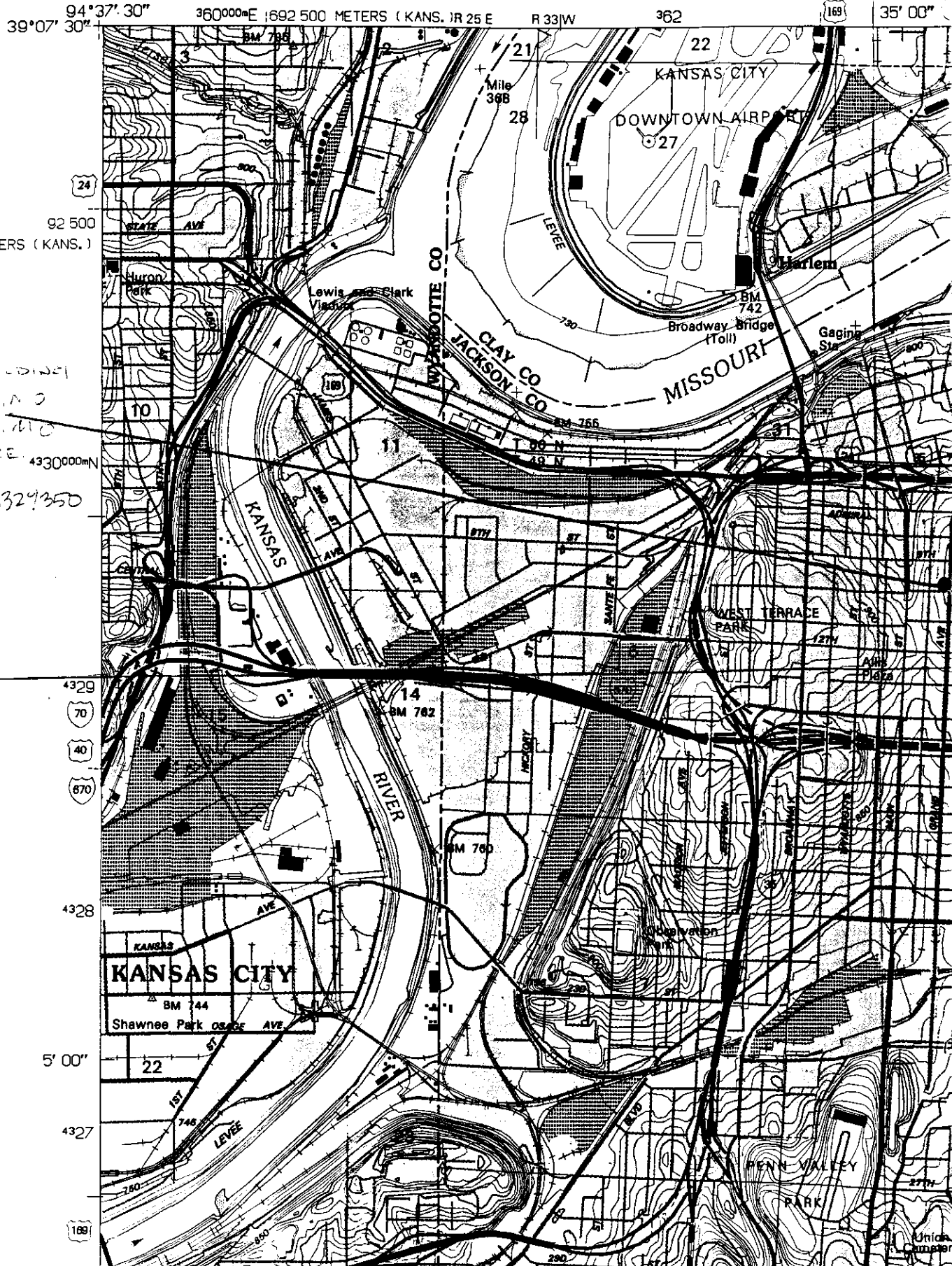
**PHOTO LOG**

Photographer: Brad Finch, F-Stop Photography, Kansas City, Missouri

Date of Photographs: June – August 2002

Location of Negatives: UMB, n.a., Kansas City, Missouri

- 1) East (front) and south elevations. View looking Northwest.
- 2) South and west elevations. View looking Northeast.
- 3) West (rear) and north elevations. View looking Southeast.
- 4) Main (Grand Boulevard) entry, east (front) elevation. View looking Southwest.
- 5) Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Boulevard, south and east elevations. View looking North.
- 6) Detail from 3<sup>rd</sup> story entablature. View looking Northwest.
- 7) Detail of building cap and upper beltcourse (stories 12-14). View looking Northwest.
- 8) Elevator doors (1940 remodel). View looking South.
- 9) Long-Bell Lumber Company Boardroom. View looking East.
- 10) Long-Bell Lumber Company Boardroom. View looking Southwest.
- 11) Long-Bell Lumber Company Boardroom. View looking Northwest.
- 12) Mantel detail, Long-Bell Lumber Company Boardroom. View looking North.
- 13) Bathroom in Long-Bell Lumber Company Boardroom. View looking East.



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